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# BNI steps into troubled waters at PURC; at least 20 staff questioned

Ghana|myjoyonline.com

-05-2017 Time: 05:05:33:am

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Nana Yaa Jantuah and Samuel Sarpong

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The Bureau of National Investigations (BNI) has began investigations at Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (PURC) following a petition to the Chief of Staff by the workers detailing allegations of financial impropriety, victimization and



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Joy News has learnt, the Executive Secretary Samuel Sarpong and Head of Public Affairs Nana Yaa Jantuah and at least 18 other employees have been invited by the BNI.

## Background

A Joy News report by Kwetey Nettey brought to the fore, a tumultuous relationship between staff of the utilities regulator and its Management.

It emerged that between 2013 and 2015, the PURC collected monies from utility companies to organise public meetings after huge increases in tariffs had incensed clients.





The monies were paid in cash to PURC officials, a senior ECG staff has said. The collection of monies has been criticised as inappropriate - it is wrong for a regulator to collect monies from the regulated.

The monies were collected in 2013 and 2015 from utility companies which according to the PURC was to fund nationwide public meetings on controversial reviews of utility tariffs. A senior staff at ECG tells Joy News some of the monies were paid in cash to officials of the PURC.

After the monies were raised, [more than GH¢470,000 was paid into the personal](#)

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... have also been raised about a sole sourced contract with an Israeli firm.

At least \$400,000 was paid to the firm for software and ancillary services without collecting withholding tax in breach of section 84(2) of the Internal Revenue Act (Act 592).



Staff have called for an independent audit of the Commission's financial statements and also demanded the dissolution of a "dysfunctional" Board headed by Dr Emmanuel Annan.



On 1st March, 2017 the Energy committee of parliament summoned the PURC as part of the committee's own investigation into the matter.

### BNI begins investigations

But BNI has also stepped into the matter, reportedly on the instructions of the Chief of Staff Frema Opare.



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...freedom. I was asked some questions based on the petition I had signed. He told Joy News.

The Executive Secretary of PURC Samuel Sarpong, Head of Public Affairs Nana Yaa Jantuah and an accounts officer were also invited and detained by the BNI.

...ve been granted bail but are assisting the Bureau in investigations.

...ner staff who pleaded anonymity explained to Joy News, the BNI quizzed him about his claim of financial infractions at the commission and victimization by top official at the utilities regulator.

In an interview with Kwetey Nartey, he recounted his testimony at the BNI.

'Prior to my being removed from office, I had raised certain issues concerning governances and finances and I believe that didn't go down well with management at the time",

Meanwhile the Union have insisted their boss and head of Public Relations be removed.

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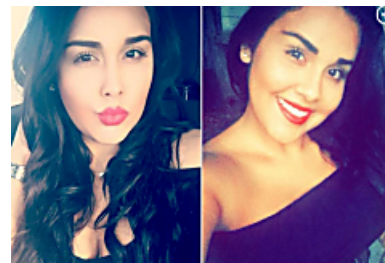
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